

# NARFE MARYLAND FEDERATION

## Winter 2025 Newsletter

### EDWARD HOLLAND

Maryland Federation President

Thank you for being part of a movement that ensures public policy reflects the needs and voices of the people it serves. Your NARFE Maryland executive team continues its work to strengthen our public engagement and has restored the practice of allowing an alternate to be reimbursed for attending a NARFE Maryland Federation conference or board meeting on behalf of the chapter president. I am counting on you to continue working with NARFE National and the NARFE Maryland Legislative Directorate to reach out to your national and local elected officials on behalf of active and retired federal employees. I continue to seek a Public Relations Officer and a Service Officer. If you wish to learn about these positions, please contact me.



### U.S. Armed Forces Sesquicentennial

The NARFE Maryland Veterans Affairs Directorate was proud to honor the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marine Corps in 2025. This 250-year milestone is a great opportunity to honor the service, sacrifices, and achievements of the men and women who have served in these branches. It is also a time to reflect on how each branch has adapted to changing technologies, geopolitical dynamics, and national security needs over the years. [Photo: Melanie and Ed Holland at 250th Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Arlington.]

### U.S. Army (Founded 1775)

The Continental Congress established the U.S. Army on June 14, 1775. As the oldest branch of our armed forces, the Army has been involved in nearly every conflict in U.S. history, from the Revolutionary War to modern-day operations. The Army's role is primarily land-based combat and defense, with a focus on securing and defending national interests.

### U.S. Navy (Founded 1775)

The U.S. Navy was officially established just a few months after the Army, on October 13, 1775, by the Continental Congress. The Navy has been instrumental in protecting U.S. shores, securing international trade routes, and projecting military power worldwide. It is often the first responder to crises on the global stage, and its technological advancements, like aircraft carriers and submarines, have redefined modern warfare.

### U.S. Marine Corps (Founded 1775)

The U.S. Marine Corps was founded on November 10, 1775, by the Continental Congress. Although it is a separate branch, the Marine Corps is a part of the Department of the Navy. Known for its rapid-response capabilities, the Marines often serve as the first line of defense in combat, with a focus on amphibious warfare and special operations.

**TERESA BAKER**  
Maryland Federation 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Legislation

The record 43-day government shutdown has ended, and the countdown clock has started on the next appropriations lapse. NARFE [supported](#) the measure to reopen the government which restores pay and backpay to all federal employees but expires on January 30, 2026. As I write this, Senate Appropriations Committee Republicans disagree on funding levels, and the House and Senate are proposing to bundle the nine unfinished FY 2026 appropriations bills differently, so another shutdown is possible.

**Maryland legislators support NARFE members**

In Maryland, we are lucky to have two U.S. Senators and many other elected officials fighting for us. My own **Congresswoman, Sarah Elfreth (D-MD-03)**, convened a Town Hall in Laurel in October with **Attorney General Brown, Comptroller Brooke Lierman**, and **Senator Angela Alsobrooks**. Rep. Elfreth leads on several key bills including the [Help FEDS Act HR5572](#), [Protect Our Probationary Employees Act HR1989](#), and [Shutdown Student Loans for Feds Act HR5843](#). She is also a cosponsor of the [Saving the Civil Service Act HR 492/S 134](#) to protect merit based civil service, the [Federal Adjustment of Income Rates or “FAIR” Act HR 493](#) to provide a 4.3% pay increase for federal employees in 2026 with a 3.3% across-the-board increase, and a 1% average increase to locality pay rates, and the [Family Building FEHB Fairness Act HR 1670](#) to require Federal Employee Health Benefit plans to cover assisted reproductive treatment.

NARFE deploys a variety of tools to advance our priorities including NARFE PAC, legal action, public relations, and marketing. NARFE coordinates advocacy work using headquarters lobbying staff plus the “Grassroots and Grasstops” made up of members as well as the National President and National Secretary/Treasurer, Federation and Chapter Presidents and Legislative Chairs, Congressional District Leaders and Senatorial Leaders. You can help by answering every call to action using the [Legislative Action Center](#).

**Federal job losses in Maryland**

In September, the Maryland Department of Labor reported that 15,100 federal jobs have been lost in Maryland since January 2025. All NARFE Maryland Federation members recognize that the State of Maryland is headquarters to many federal agencies, including the Social Security Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, National Security Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Our Federation’s own NARFE Region 2 Vice President, Paul Schwartz, testified in Annapolis for the [Federal Worker Emergency Loan Program](#).



Teresa Baker, Sen. Angela Alsobrooks, and Ruanda Davis in Greenbelt on September 4.



Paul Schwartz, Bob Doyle, Reps. Sarah Elphreth & Steny Hoyer, and Teresa in Annapolis-September 18.



Delaney, and Kathy Siggins in Frederick on August 27.

**PAUL SCHWARTZ**  
NARFE Region 02 Vice President

With the ongoing assault on the federal workforce by the current administration, I have been speaking to groups of concerned active and retired federal employees in the five states comprising NARFE's Region 02. One of the challenges I face as a NARFE representative is not to come off as "political" since NARFE prides itself on being nonpartisan. Prior to my recent presentation in Delaware, I was advised "not" to be political for fear that some attendees might take offense and walk out. While I was concerned, I realized that it is impossible to talk about the challenges the federal community faces without addressing the specific threats posed by the current administration. SO, I DID, and no one walked out.

How are we, NARFE, supposed to resonate with potential new members if we do not stand proud against the attack on feds for fear that being more visible may place us in the crosshairs of the administration? With every bill we support or oppose, there are legislators on each side. Is supporting legislation being too political? I think not. We donate to various legislator campaigns through NARFE PAC. Is that being too political? I think not.

NARFE is justifiably proud that we played a significant role in protecting federal benefits threatened initially by that poorly named "Big, Beautiful Bill". We did it through advocacy ensuring that it did not turn FEHB into a voucher system or have retirement calculated on the high-5 rather than the current high-3 salary years. The point, then, is that we, NARFE, must tackle threats to the federal environment from whomever those threats emanate from without concerns about how that work is being categorized. We must stand tall and be vocal and demonstrate to all members and potential members why NARFE, NOW MORE THAN EVER!.



Chapter 0409 met with Rep. April McClain Delaney's staff in Frederick on August 27. District Director Sarah Dreyer, Alzheimer's Coordinator Kathy Siggins, Chief of Staff Sonny Holding, Teresa Baker, Constituent Services Representative Sanjay George, CDL-6 Beverly Rynex, RVP2 Paul Schwartz, Chapter 1<sup>st</sup> VP Chuck Caloia, and Chapter President Scott Darby.

**STEVE GROOM**  
Maryland Federation Second Vice President, Membership

Many thanks to our diligent member recruiters for bringing in new members. Between September and October these six individuals brought in new members: **Lawrence Loosararian, Mary Geneva Leon, Cindy Buhse, Karleen Hagan, Rafus Grier, and Candice Nash**. Now, how do we keep them? Outreach and communication will make them feel included.

Several chapters hold hybrid meetings allowing members to attend in person or virtually. For example, in October, the **Greater Montgomery County Chapter** held their annual open health benefits season with federal health providers in person and over Zoom. The session was also recorded for those unable to attend and is posted on their website. Another tool available free to chapters is a “microsite” on the NARFE website. Training is available to prospective webmasters for all chapters wanting to participate in the program. It is a six-week course with two meetings a week and homework on developing and maintaining chapter microsites.

A third type of engagement is the traditional welcome letter (or email) to new members personally welcoming them to the chapter and inviting them to come to the next meeting. **Chapter 0251 Annapolis** sends welcome emails to new members, emails lapsed members urging them to rejoin, thanks renewing members, and gives prospective members a copy of the newsletter and an invitation to join. If your chapter plans a member recruitment event, contact NARFE headquarters about [\*\*Matching Funds\*\*](#) for it.

**BOB DOYLE**  
Maryland Federation State Legislative Committee Chair



The best way to connect NARFE members to their legislators is to invite the elected officials to Chapter Meetings. **Chapter 0251 Annapolis** invites a state legislator to May meetings for a briefing on the preceding Maryland General Assembly session. Before the legislature convenes in early January, they try to have a legislator offer a session preview.  
[Photo: Del. Dylan Behler (D-30A) and Bob Doyle.]

The Federation has a state Political Action Committee—Maryland NARFE PAC—which works with the State Legislative Committee (SLC) by raising and contributing money to Maryland legislators who support our priorities. Contributions to Maryland NARFE-PAC help our SLC build strong relationships with Maryland lawmakers, a key component to winning legislative fights. The Maryland NARFE PAC allows members to attend events for candidates. We prioritized events for legislators on the

Committees responsible for tax issues: the Senate Budget and Tax Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. But we now also follow senior-related bills under other committees' jurisdiction. And we look always to all legislators to garner support as widespread as possible for our goals.

I appreciate the contributions from many members who donate to the Maryland NARFE PAC. Maryland legislators cannot hold fundraising events during the legislative session. If you are aware of an upcoming fundraiser for your State Senator or Delegate and would like to attend, PLEASE contact me for information on how to request PAC funds to attend a fundraiser.

**VIRGINIA BENDER**  
Maryland Federation Alzheimer's Chair

The Alzheimer's Association International Conference® 2025 brought together more than 11,700 researchers, clinicians, and dementia professionals from around the world for an event highlighting the results from the **U.S. POINTER** trial, which showed that a structured lifestyle intervention can slow age-related cognitive decline for up to two years. NARFE supported the groundbreaking U.S. POINTER research with a generous contribution. The commitment of NARFE members helps drive progress and brings us closer to the cure. Thank you for your continued partnership and passion for a future without Alzheimer's and other dementia. More information is available from the [Alzheimer's Association](#) website.

**Driving and Dementia**

Driving requires the ability to react quickly, so a person living with Alzheimer's will likely become unable to drive safely. Planning ahead can help ease the transition away from driving before it becomes an issue. You must address the topic with sympathy because retiring from driving is difficult. It is important to acknowledge a person's feelings, while ensuring that person's safety and the safety of others. Ask your physician to advise the person not to drive. Involving your physician in a family conference on driving may be more effective than trying to persuade the person not to drive by yourself. Ask the physician to write a letter or prescription stating that the person with Alzheimer's must not drive.

**PATRICIA FARMER**  
Maryland Gerontological Association Representative

As the NARFE Maryland Federation representative to the [Maryland Gerontological Association](#), I currently serve as a Board Member and a member of the Membership Committee. I was appointed to this position in 2013 by then-NARFE Maryland Federation President Ted Jensen. I was featured in a Member Spotlight in the November MGA newsletter as the longest standing member of MGA. Dedicated to advancing the knowledge and increasing the competence of individuals striving to improve the quality of life of older adults and their families, MGA hosts informative events on a wide variety of topics. Retired membership is \$25 annually.

**MARYLAND CHAPTER NEWS**



Melody Kebe, Patricia Nix, and Ed Holland at Chapter 306 Hagerstown meeting on September 12.



Greater Bowie-Crofton Chapter 1747 hosted the Federation Officers for a town hall meeting on September 18. [Photo: Melinda Scott, NARFE MD Federation Photographer]

## MARYLAND CHAPTER NEWS



### Ocean Area Chapter 2274 Names Network Coordinator

Bev Wright of NARFE Chapter 2274 Ocean Area will serve as their FEDHub Community Coordinator and build and manage a new microsite as the chapter's webmaster. Bev's been a NARFE member since 2019 when she lived in Edgewater and participated in the Bay Area and Annapolis Chapters. In 2020, Bev moved to the Town of Berlin and joined the Ocean Area Chapter. Bev volunteered to compile the 2023 and 2025 Federation's Biennial Conference booklet. Bev lives with her two Havanese pups, Tanner and Cookie. Bev's sister, also a federal retiree, recently relocated with her husband from Silver Spring to Ocean Pines, MD, and joined the Ocean Area Chapter. Bev's brother and sister-in-law reside in Arkansas.

### Chapter 1734 Advocates for Howard County Tax Relief for Seniors

On September 15, Chapter 1734 Legislative Vice President John Van de Vaarst testified to the Howard County Council legislative committee on measures to provide tax relief for seniors. The committee commended the Chapter for sending an officer to testify and hoped that NARFE will remain active in future legislation.



### Bowie-Crofton Chapter 1747 Hosts Health Fair

The Chapter's Annual Health Fair had bit of a twist this year. The theme "Healthy Me Education Day" was created to expand more on overall healthy living to coincide with the 2025 Federal Benefits Open Season. Over 40 members and guests took full advantage of visiting seven healthcare partners about their healthcare plans and rates, testing different types of medical equipment/supplies, and hearing from the community wellness coordinator about the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle (e.g., socializing, sleeping, limiting alcohol, being mobile, etc.).



### Greater Montgomery County Chapter 1892 Convenes

On September 30, more than 50 people gathered in person and online as the new Greater Montgomery County Chapter 1892. Three chapters—Western Montgomery, Wheaton/Glenmont, and White Oak—merged with Chapter 1892 Aspen Hill to make up the new Chapter. Their first meeting brought together NARFE members from all the former chapters under their new name. The Maryland NARFE Federation thanks all the many members who worked to make us stronger together!



### Laurel Chapter 422 Met with Maryland Legislators

On November 5, Chapter 422-Laurel President Samuel Raines hosted Maryland District 21 legislators Sen. James Rosapepe and Del. Mary Lehman at their chapter meeting to hear about legislation priorities. The Chapter also heard from Federal Employee Health Benefit Program representatives from GEHA and Blue Cross/Blue Shield and held a 50/50 raffle with the proceeds going to Alzheimer's Association.



As of: June 2025

Maryland Federation of NARFE  
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### CALENDAR (subject to change)

- Dec 29, 2025 Secretary to send Call Letter for February 2026 EXCOM and Board Meetings
- Feb 2, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting 3-6pm | Comfort Inn Hotel, Bowie MD
- Feb 3 Board Meeting | Comfort Inn Hotel, Bowie MD
- Mar 6 Deadline to submit Spring Federation Newsletter Items to Editor
- Apr 10 Team Registration Deadline for Mini-Conference
- May 4 Executive Committee Meeting (3-6pm) | Comfort Inn Hotel, Bowie MD
- May 5-6 Mini-Conference | Comfort Inn Hotel, Bowie MD
- July 24 Deadline to submit Fall Federation Newsletter Items to Editor
- Aug 24-26 NARFE FEDcon26 | Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis, IN
- Fri Sep 18 Board Registration Deadline for Board Meeting - October

\* The Board consists of officers, chapter presidents and an at-large national-only member.



[www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)

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